(U//FOUO) 'Surging' for the Iraqi Elections

FROM: SIGINT Communications
Unknown
Run Date: 02/10/2005

(S) NSA was widely praised for its support to the Iraqi elections held on January 30th, with all elements performing at the top of their game. Contributing to this success were some innovative procedures that the Agency put in place ahead of time. Here's how it came about:

(S//REL) In the latter half of December, as it became clear that the elections would indeed be held on schedule, the Iraq Issue Management Team began planning for the big day. First they considered "lessons learned" from previous events, such as the Afghan elections and NSA's support to PHANTOM FURY, the military operation in Fallujah. Next, they enlisted an "election coordinator" -- ████████████ USMC -- to spearhead preparations.

(S//REL) ████████ was a great choice for this role, as he had recently returned from a 90+ day tour at CSG Baghdad, where he gained an in-depth understanding of the customers' needs. He assembled an Election Support Team composed of representatives from all concerned target offices, NSOC, Customer Relationships, etc. This team met almost daily to develop the support plan.

(S//REL) Here's what was done:

- The NSOC Crisis Action Cell (CAC) staffed a 24/7 **Iraq Elections Desk in NSOC**. In addition to responding to queries and requests, the desk issued Iraq Elections Updates every 12 hours to a select distribution.

- The existing Summary Desk in NSOC put out an **Iraqi Elections SIGINT Summary** every 12 hours between 27 January and 4 February, surging on Election Day with a 4-hour summary in support of theater customers.

- An **Iraq Elections webpage** was established on both NSANet and Intelink, by web developers in NSOC and the Intelink office. Watch personnel at the Meade Operations Center (which doesn't usually have a dedicated Iraq mission) joined the effort by updating the webpages every two hours. The pages included all relevant SIGINT, as well as customer Information Needs, and even open source information. The pages received about 5500 hits from people seeking information.

- S2's MENA (Middle East North Africa) Product Line put together a temporary desk to issue **SIGINT assessment reports**, much sought-after by customers.

- Sanitized (e.g. SECRET-level) SIGINT reporting was transferred onto **SIPRNet** for easy access by non-SCI cleared personnel in theater.

By making creative use of the talents of the CAC and MOC watch personnel, the plan allowed subject-matter experts to focus on producing intelligence (over 100 reports a day) and responding to specific queries.

(S//REL) Customers had a variety of ways to get information: they could go directly to the right NSA point-of-contact with a question, could check the Iraq Elections webpage for information, or they could call the NSOC desk. This approach worked very well. One tactical customer in theater described NSA's election support as "great," adding "NSA mobilized for the coverage and did a very good job!" He especially praised product report summaries, the push-pull approach of getting information out (via the NSOC updates and the Elections web page), and the release of intelligence at the REL IRAQ level.

(S) These procedures will likely be activated at least twice more this year -- for the November 2005 drafting of a constitution and the December seating of a national assembly in Iraq... and can serve as a model to follow for other future events.

"(U//FOUO) SIDtoday articles may not be republished or reposted outside NSANet without the consent of S0121 ([DL sid comms](#)).”